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V I E W
OF THE
ISLE of WIGHT,
IN FOUR LETTERS TO A FRIEND.

CONTAINING
Not only a DESCRIPTION of its FORM and principal PRODUCTIONS, but the most authentic and material ARTICLES of its natural, political and commercial History.

BY JOHN STURCH.
(FOURTH EDITION, corrected and enlarged)

The roving fight
Pursues its pleasing course o'er neighbouring hills,
Of many a different form and different hue,
Bright with ripe corn, or green with grass, or dark
With clover's purple bloom.

SCOT'S AMWELL.

Printed for and sold by the AUTHOR in Newport,
ISLE OF WIGHT.
MDCCXCI.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IT may not be improper to remark, in order to account for some expressions in the following Letters, that the two first editions of them were published before the appearance of the large and accurate work which came out under the patronage of Sir Richard Worsley—Till then, the writer of this manual, never saw any account of the Island which was worthy to be called a history, either for extent or truth. He had of course an unbeaten path to tread, in respect to what depended on matters of record. He was happy however to find, that a production, which was the fruit of the best accesses to informations of this kind, rather confirmed than materially contradicted his own previous statement of historical facts,



LET.

LETTER I.

DEAR SIR,

GEOGRAPHY and Natural History, are I know, your favourite amusements. Had they also been mine, I might perhaps have been better qualified, or at least better prepared for such a description of this island as would have been somewhat more answerable to both our wishes. As it is, the best account I can give you of it will be much at your service. I mean to be concise, and shall certainly be deficient; but, I shall have one advantage over those who have borrowed all their information from books, that what falls under my own observation, will, at least, have the merit of being *true*.

THE ISLE of WIGHT (by far the largest and best in the British channel) enjoys a very commodious situation, being nearly in the centre of that part of the English coast which

faces the south, and at a very convenient distance from it. Both these circumstances are happily favourable to its commercial and other intercourses, as well with the county of Hants in particular (of which it is a considerable part) as with the parent island in general. To the south, as we lie nearly opposite to Cape la Hogue in France, and at the distance of about eighteen leagues, the sea on that side of us has to the eye the full effect of an open and unbounded ocean. This alone, to one of your taste for the beauties and sublimities of nature would, I am certain, be considered as a noble and entertaining object. One indeed always beholds it with a pleasing kind of astonishment. But when this is enlivened with a view of those floating castles which are the pride and bulwark of the British empire, we have then such a scene of grandeur, such a combination of nature and art, as perhaps the whole world cannot equal. Such entertainments are no where more frequently or advantageously exhibited than at the east and south east parts of this island. Indeed the interior channel, cal-

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led the Solent,* presents us with the same objects in kind, and if they fall short in respect to degree or magnitude, they make amends by the great frequency of their appearance, and the natural prospects are far more diversified. The breadth of this water is greater or less as the lands on either side run in a strait or winding direction. In most places it may be five or six miles over, but in some, especially towards the west, not near so far. In one place in particular, there is so great a projection of the land towards the island, as to leave a passage by water of little more than a single mile. There is a tradition which has been credited by some respectable writers, that here was once a compleat Isthmus. I am not antiquarian enough either to establish this fact or to confute it. † It seems, however, pretty certain,

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* Otherwise Solvent, perhaps a *solvendo*, from its property of loosing or separating the two opposite shores.

† The story is, that the Carthaginians, who, in their prosperity engrossed much of the commerce of those times, had settlements in the Scilly Islands. That they bought up the tin of Cornwall, conveyed it by the above supposed Isthmus to the south of what is now the Isle of Wight; from thence trans-

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that if this were ever the case at all, it must have been more than 2000 years back. The Romans of that time considered this part of our country as an island, and speak of it under the name of Vectis, or sometimes Vecta. As such also it was laid down both in Pliny's and Ptolemy's Geography † though the former placed it by mistake between Britain and Ireland. But to pass this no very interesting circumstance, in its present state, it extends to about twenty-four miles in length, and its central breadth, (which is by much the greatest) is twelve or thirteen. The whole makes a kind of elliptical, though very irregular figure, of about sixty miles in circumference. According to these dimensions it should, by elliptical measurement, contain 226 square miles, or above 184000 acres of land. But great deductions are

ported it to Gaul, and so to the ports of the Mediterranean. But these things are at least too minute for the small scale of my plan. See Camden with Gibsons's notes; Borlace's History of Cornwall, &c.

† Ptolomæus inter Galliam et Britanniam. Plinius inter Britanniam et Hiberniam Vectem constituit. M. S. penes B. Cooke, F.R.S.

are due to the narrowness of the two extremities, more especially that to the west, besides bays, creeks, &c. so that in the opinion of a gentleman, who had much better opportunities of knowing it than myself, somewhere about 120,000 acres is much nearer the truth. *

It may not be improper here to observe, that a compleat tour round the island by water is, in the summer season, a very agreeable excursion. In this case, supposing our departure to be from Cowes to the east, we then pass the royal hospital at Hasler, the town and harbour of Portsmouth, South Sea Castle, &c. on the left, and the pleasantly rising village of Ride, the seats of St. John's, Appley, and Priory on the right, in our way to Spithead and St. Helen's, places which I need not say are of note as the rendezvous of the royal navy.

From thence we proceed to the southern coast, commonly called the back of the island, which affords many marine objects of curiosity. Such I call those prodigious rocks and cliffs which

* Sir Richard Worley's estimate is no more than 100,000 acres.

which bound and guard this part of our coast, and can only be seen to advantage at sea. There is something extremely amusing to the eye in these huge masses of rough materials, "A fortress built by nature for herself," as Shakespear calls it. If they give us no idea of the beautiful, they certainly do of the sublime, as they have an air of grandeur and magnificence which is awfully pleasing and attractive. Even their rude deformity has a fitness in it to contend with the ruder element which they are meant to control. One sees, with no less satisfaction, with what fury they are daily assaulted, and with what indignant scorn they repel the onset. In a word, though they may be despised as objects of deformity, They are in reality our very good friends. They say to the encroaching foe, in the words of him who appointed them their station, "Hitherto shalt thou come and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

You will hence anticipate the remark, that having these natural ramparts to defend us, we have also another advantage from them, which is, that we are in little apprehension of being invaded.

invaded by foreigners in that quarter. We are happy in this truth; as there are in reality but few places in all the coast which are accessible to ships of any burthen or force; and in the part where we are most vulnerable, we have a fortress which mounts twenty pieces of cannon, and has embrasures for more upon occasion.* It makes a pretty object as we pass by it, being well built and kept in good repair, but is not constantly garrisoned, as most edifices of this kind are now considered as of small national consequence.

About two miles to the westward of this there is another opening: but the shore is flat, and admits not of the near approach of such ships as might give us alarm: this is called Shanklin Chine, which being a considerable natural curiosity, as such may deserve a mention. The chine, as they call it, for what reason I know not) is made by an opening of one of the cliffs above mentioned. It appears as though it were

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* Sandown, or Sandham Fort. This and the castles at Cowe and Yarmouth, were built by Henry VIII. out of the ruins of the religious houses. M. S. of Sir John Oglander.

rent from top to bottom. The mouth of the gap stretches to a vast width, on the one side almost perpendicular, on the other more shelving. The bottom is, for the most part, a level smooth beach, where one may walk at low water and survey these stupendous heights with much pleasure. The side which is most upon a declivity is mounted by means of a large number of inartificial steps, by which we ascend to a little cottage, which is kept open as a house of accommodation for such company as either curiosity or dissipation may happen to collect. As such it is esteemed one of the curiosities of the island, and much frequented both by strangers and others. The method is, either for such parties to carry with them their own provisions, and get it there made ready for their use, or to take the chance of what the house or vicinage will afford them: of the latter sort crabs and lobsters in their season, and in the highest excellence are seldom or never wanting. A few miles further on will bring us to another place, equally if not more frequented for the same pleasurable purposes. The name of this is Steep-hill, late a chosen situation for a
delightful

delightful villa, built by the Right Hon. Hans Stanley, our then governor. * This building is in the genteel cottage taste, (*simplex munditiis*) adorned with a variety of rich and curious paintings within, and without by a pleasure garden, shrubbery, &c. Near this is also a house of entertainment, to which strangers are invited by scenes which are romantic beyond description. We there not only enjoy a fine open prospect of the sea, (from which the distance is but about a furlong) but are in full view of a large tract of land, which has not, that I know, its parallel. It commonly goes by the name of Under-Cliff, because included between the sea on one hand, and a high cliff on the other. This cliff extends some miles in length, a great part of which is so regularly perpendicular, that at a small distance one would really take it for some old rampart-wall That had formerly been raised by art. The tract of land betwixt this and the sea is perhaps about half a mile broad, rather uneven and

* Now the property and residence of the Hon. Wilbraham Tollemache, Esq.

and hillocky in its appearance indeed, but of so rich a soil, and so finely cultivated, that no part of the island can boast a more excellent produce. To this its advantageous situation, in respect to warmth, no doubt greatly contributes. Its exposure is to the south. The cliff, which rises so much above it, is a natural garden-wall sheltering it from the northern blasts, and reflecting the solar rays with redoubled force. The fine springs and natural cascades which adorn this favourite spot, may also operate to the same fertilising effect; but however this be, it is, altogether, one of the most pleasing and singular objects of the kind that is any where to be met with.*

To proceed, however, with our voyage: after leaving this curious phenomenon, and getting round a pretty large cape, we are brought into Chale Bay, so denominated from the parish of Chale, by which it is environed. This bay

* It is by most supposed, and perhaps not without reason, that this part of the land formerly gave way, separated from what is now the cliff, and settled in this surprising form. This may seem the rather probable, as the report is, that at a small distance there is such another fall under the water.

bay is lined with one continued chain of those tremendous rocks which are so often fatal to the hapless mariner. The situation of it is such as to occasion a most violent roll of tide into it, so that ships sailing upon a lee-shore, and especially in the night, are unwarily driven upon these rocks, and often beat to pieces. Few winters pass without misfortunes more or less of this kind, of which some people have made a very lucrative, perhaps, but certainly a very barbarous advantage. Of late years indeed such disasters have fallen under the immediate regulation of proper officers, and all plundering discouraged by the punishment of its detection. However small the advantage of this may finally be to the merchant, humanity will delight in the suppression of all customs of such extreme depravity. But to return. The next object which particularly strikes our attention, is a long range of white cliffs near a village called Freshwater: they are of a chalky substance and a prodigious magnitude; some of them rise to the height of 600 feet above the sea which washes them. They excite curiosity also on this singular account, that in the sum-

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mer months they are inhabited by incredible numbers of exotic birds, which seem to assemble themselves purely to enjoy the advantage of these warm and glowing rocks to hatch their eggs, and be nurseries for their young. This however is the use they make of them, for which purpose their first appearance is generally about the middle of May, and they produce a new generation fit to emigrate by about the middle of August following, at which time they take themselves off, and we see no more of them till the next breeding season. They are of two or three different species, as is plain from their beaks and plumage, and, whilst with us, they get their subsistence out of the sea: for this reason their flesh is too rank for human food, but they are not altogether useless: the fisherman is glad of their carcasses for his bait, and the upholsterer will give a good price for their feathers: their eggs, which are about the size of those of a duck, are said to be full as good also for any culinary purposes. The country people therefore want not motives to exercise their skill and dexterity in taking them. They have a way of doing it, which for its oddity
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may deserve to be noted. In the first place a large stake or iron bar is driven into the top of the cliff, to this is fastened a cart rope, or something of like strength, having at the other end of it a stick put cross-wise for the adventurer to sit upon, or support himself by; and with this simple apparatus he lets himself down at the front of this horrid precipice; there he attacks his intended prey as it flies in or out of its nest, and secures as much as he can of it.

Nil est mortalibus arduum, is a maxim which these rude artists undoubtedly verify, but whatever tempting profits may reward these enterprises, you will hardly suppose they stand in need of a royal patent to keep the trade to themselves.

I fear you will be ready to think, that these harmless strangers have far less excusable persecutors, I mean such (and many such there are) who have no other object but that of mere diversion in going out in boats to shoot at them.

The report of a gun causes such numbers of them to fly out and hover round their assailants, as are astonishing, and it may doubtless afford some kind of amusement to wound and

destroy. But will humanity subscribe to this wanton recreation, or may it not rather be reproved in the language of the pelted frogs? "Gentlemen, you should consider that what is sport to you, is death to us and our helpless orphans also."

Upon leaving however these temporary colonists, (which I should always do without disturbing them) we presently arrive at the western extremity of the island. This presents us with a full view of that remarkable group of rocks so well known by the name of the Needles. They are so called in reference to their sharp and craggy points. Several of them are at considerable distances from the land, as well as from each other; and as they rise to the height of many feet above the water, they appear at a distance like the remains of some broken towers, which had been shattered and thrown down by an earthquake. They are nevertheless of nature's own curious but unpolished workmanship, and have doubtless stood for immemorable ages without any material changes. Nothing however is an absolute proof against the injuries of time. It
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is but a few years since that one even of those solid pyramids yielded to the fury of a storm and fell, to the no small surprise of those who were within hearing of the mighty crash.

When we have cleared these rocks (which in the seaman's phrase is going through the Needles) we re-enter the Solent before-mentioned, where the scene becomes more familiar and domestic. Instead of massy rocks and towering cliffs, we have lands in view which rise with a more easy elegance, and the *portus objectu laterum* favours us with a more calm and placid sea. In the course of this passage beside

The slow ascending hill, the lofty wood
That mantles o'er its brow,

we are entertained with a sight of the castles of Hurst and Calshot, Lutterel's Tower*, the town of Lymington, &c. on the one side, and the towns and castles of Yarmouth and Cowes

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* Lately erected by the Honourable Temple Lutterell, Esq. from whom this elegant edifice takes its name.

on the other, till the whole circuit is completed.

Before we quit this channel, however, it may be proper to observe that a number of passage vessels are constantly employed upon it, to keep up the mutual intercourses which either pleasure or business may call for. There are among these, three in government pay called packet boats, which carry the mails † from the island every day except Friday, and return with them every day except Tuesday. They pass and repass between Southampton and Cowes taking passengers, either with or without horses or carriages, and one or other of them is always in readiness to be hired on any emergency.

Besides these, there are divers other vessels which make it their business to go and return daily, between Yarmouth and Lymington, Ride, Cowes, and Portsmouth. By these and other means, both stated and accidental, we
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† By Mr. Palmer's late regulations, the excepted days are Saturday and Monday.

have little or no reason to complain of our detached and insular situation.

Our voyage, even thus made on paper, has unavoidably taken up some time. Having therefore run to such a length on scarce any thing more than the mere outlines of my subject, I must beg leave to rest till I have a further opportunity of saying that I am, with the greatest truth and respect,

Dear Sir, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R II.

HAVING held you, my dear Sir, in some kind of suspense, whilst leading you round the island, you will now think it time that I should endeavour to conduct you into it.

The most general as well as natural division of the whole is into two hundreds, called East and West Medine; that is, into two nearly equal parts, which take their names respectively from their situations in regard to a rivulet or stream, named Medina, which runs almost through the midst of the island, from south to north. This, and much such another stream, which rises a few miles to the west of Newport, are the most considerable runs of water we have. There is indeed one other not much inferior, which rises in another quarter, and takes an eastern direction; but besides these, we have numerous springs of less note plentifully dispersed over the country, so that on the whole we are well supplied with that most wholesome and essential article good water. The streams above-mentioned are also of inestimable value, as the means of manufacturing the principal produce of this country,

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as will hereafter be noted. Thus are we enriched by them without profusion, and served by streams which never oppress us with floods and inundations. When many other parts are in a manner deluged, we are perfectly free from all apprehensions of that dreadful kind, as by reason of the shortness of the run, our waters have no time to accumulate, but are presently discharged into the bosom of their common parent, the ocean.

As to the more particular or artificial division of this fortunate island, it is into twenty-nine, or more strictly speaking, thirty very unequal parishes: three of these contain boroughs, or such as have the privilege of sending each two members to parliament; namely, Newport, Newtown, and Yarmouth. Of these Newtown claims the precedence, on the score of priority of existence, and is said to have been one of the most considerable, as it is allowed to be one of the most ancient places in the island. At present, like Old Sarum, it is scarce equal to a common village; it has indeed a mayor, corporation, and town-hall, but this body consists not of inhabitants of the place,

place, but of proprietors of certain burgage tenures, which entitle them to a vote in the choice of their members.

* Yarmouth is also much inferior in its present state to what it is said to have once been. Its castle has been already mentioned, and it has still a weekly market, a town-hall, a quay for shipping, some few genteel houses, and a moderate number of inhabitants. There are two good inns †, of which the ships that occasionally anchor in the road, and passengers to and from Lymington, are the chief supports. The election of their members is in the majority of their corporation, which consists mostly of out-burgees.

The capital therefore in all respects (that of antiquity excepted) is Newport. The situation of this town is nearly in the middle of the whole

* Yarmouth, according to Sir John Oglander, (M. S. already quoted) first sent Members to Parliament, Newtown and Newport had this privilege in Q. Eliz. time, by the procurement of Sir George Carey, *ibid.*

† Strangers who visit the western part of the island, and find it inconvenient to return to Newport for the night, may here be very commodiously accommodated.

whole island, to which, with some other circumstances equally favourable to its becoming the centre of business, it has doubtless gradually owed its present superiority, and in which there is no danger of its being ever rivalled. Among these advantages of situation, may be reckoned the confluence of the two fore-mentioned streams, which, by the help of a tide that flows quite up to the town, makes a very good navigable river. At this point of union is built a quay, which is furnished with a proper crane for the purpose of loading or unloading vessels or lighters; and the neighbouring shores are occupied by convenient store-houses, to contain the corn or other commodities which are occasionally sent out or imported.

As to the town itself, it contains 550 dwellings, is situated on a very easy ascent of ground, and chiefly disposed of in three parallel streets in length, and as many in breadth. Between these, or at the points of their intersection, are three large squares, appropriated to the several markets of cattle, corn, and poultry, though it must be confessed, that the original beauty and uniformity of them have apparently suffered
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by too great an indulgence to encroachments. The public buildings are a spacious church (which has a good organ) in the center of one of these squares; and three other places of divine worship, after the manner of the several denominations of Protestant Dissenters, Independents, Baptists, and Quakers*, a guild or town-hall, and a free grammar school, for a certain number of boys, and at which many young gentlemen from abroad are usually boarded†. The dwelling-houses are generally of brick, and rather neat and convenient, than lofty or ostentatious. The taste, indeed, was formerly too low either for elegance or convenience, as appears from the style of the few older houses which are still remaining; but the modern ones come under the description just mentioned, which yet is every year improving.

Among

* That of the Quakers, has lately been disused, there being none of that denomination at present remaining.

† This school was endowed with a valuable enclosure out of the Forest of Parkhurst, by the Earl of Southampton, then Captain or Governor of the island. The Master to be chosen by the Mayor and Justices of the town of Newport, &c. M. S. aforesaid.

Among these, the mercers, and other shops, make a very good appearance, both for number and furniture; and the concourse of people which usually attend the markets, supply them with a good trade. The inns also, for the same purposes of accommodation, are large and well supported. There are perhaps few, if any, towns of the like size, which have so great a number of spacious public rooms, for the accommodation of company; among which I must not forget to mention, that there is one equally capacious and elegant, in which there is a very genteel periodical assembly, for the accommodation of such as chuse to bear a part in those polite amusements.

The civil internal government of the town (held by the charter from James I.) is by a mayor, recorder, and three senior aldermen, who act as justices of the peace within the limits of the borough *. The election of its representatives is by a majority of twelve alder-

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* That under which the magistracy now acts was granted by Charles II. but there were several prior grants of a similar nature.

men, and the same number of burgesſes, who muſt all be inhabitants at the time when they are choſen into that body. On the whole, one may venture to ſay, there are few places where independence may meet with more ſources of rational enjoyment, or where virtuous induſtry is better rewarded, than in this clean, healthful and elegant town. Its ſtreets * are open and airy, its buildings neat and convenient, its environs pleaſant, its proviſions good and plentiful, and its inhabitants friendly and ſociable.

The towns of next conſequence to this, are thoſe of Brading and Weſt-Cowes. The former is a ſmall market town, about fix or ſeven miles to the eaſt of Newport. The road to it from the place laſt mentioned affords a delightful view of the eaſt part of the iſland, but the place is in no reſpect conſiderable either for extent or buſineſs †. Weſt-Cowes, for number
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* Theſe are now to be all new paved, in the modern taſte, by commiſſion appointed in a late Act of Parliament for the purpoſe, and when the work is completed, will be a ſtill further addition to the cleannefs and elegance of the town.

† Sir John Oglander tells us, that in Queen Elizabeth's time
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ber of inhabitants, is perhaps not much inferior to Newport itself*. It takes the epithet of West, from its situation in respect to another Cowes on the opposite side of the harbour's mouth. A great part of the west town stands on a hill, and enjoys as pleasant and extensive a prospect as can well be conceived. The air, indeed, is rather keen; but for a summer residence it is extremely eligible. Of late years it has been much used by those who are fond of bathing in salt water, or are recommended to it for their health. The lower parts of the town, where the chief business is done, are rather crowded, it being a place, which, in the shipping way, has long possessed a considerable share of trade, and of which that of the Carolina rice ships, till the late rupture with Ame-

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this was a handsome town. In it, saith he, were many good livers that might dispend 40l. a-year a-piece. What an alteration of times since dispendng 40l. a-year was reckoned genteel living.

* It has since appeared, by actual survey, that the inhabitants of Newport were at that time 2773, and those of Cowes 1660. Sir Richard Wortley's Hist.

rica, was a very capital branch *. At East-Cowes is the custom-house for the whole island, and in both there are merchants, who carry on a foreign trade to a considerable amount.

I may add, that Ride, opposite to Portsmouth, though it be not considered as a town, is yet a place of some extent, both in building and number of inhabitants, and its neighbourhood is dignified with several genteel seats of independent competence, and which enjoy a most elegant situation. But having thus mentioned the places of principal note in point of extent, business, or number of people, I proceed to such as are most remarkable upon some other accounts.

Among these, the names of Carisbrooke †, and its castle, are familiar to the historic ear,
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* From 30 to 50 of these ships annually arrived at this port, where from twenty-two to thirty-five thousand barrels of this grain were usually screened, repacked, and shipped for Holland, Germany, &c.

† Brumpton Chron. 798. calls it Withgaraburg, when speaking of the native Britons, who were killed there by the cruelty of Cerdic's nephews. *Paucis Britones ejusdem Insule accolas quos in ea iwen reputant in loco qui dicitur Withgaraburg.*

from their connection with the story of that ill advised and unfortunate monarch Charles I. The village is of such antiquity as to coincide with some of the most early anecdotes of the island itself. Its situation, about three-fourths of a mile to the west of Newport, is pleasant enough, but its buildings at present are but few and mean, being mostly occupied by labouring people. Its church has a handsome tower, which, standing on an eminence, shews itself to advantage. It is remarkable for its having eight, perhaps as musical bells as were ever cast. In the year 1071, this sacred edifice (dedicated to the honour of St. Mary) was richly endowed by William Fitz Osborne, Earl of Hereford, to which was then annexed a convent of Cistercian monks. There are some remains of the building (now converted into a farm-house) still retaining the name of the Priory. I should have mentioned also, that nature has enriched this village with some fine springs of most excellent water.

On another and much greater eminence, opposite to the priory, stands the castle, which I need not say is particularly celebrated, as hav-

ing been the prison of the royal personage before mentioned in the year 1647 *. At that time, no doubt, the whole was in good repair, but being suffered to run to ruin (perhaps ever since) it is now, in some parts especially, in a mournful state of dilapidation. It is still, however, a venerable ruin. The grand entrance, or gateway, has a fine appearance, and some of its outworks are tolerably entire. It is surrounded by a trench, with a fine terrace walk of about three quarters of a mile, which a pure air and a pleasant prospect make it a very agreeable as well as healthful exercise, to measure over. Within the walls we find spacious areas for the refreshment and discipline of the garrison, a chapel and governor's apartments in pretty good preservation. Those, however, which contained the royal prisoner, are totally demolished, but they still shew you the window at which he ineffectually attempted to escape †.

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A good representation, and some account of it, may be seen in the Universal Magazine, April 1776.

† The King fell into this situation merely as the effect of his own timidity. Whilst at Hampton Court, in October 47, he became extremely alarmed for his personal safety, and tho' candour

Of late years the governor's house has been occasionally converted into an hospital for sick and

scandour will allow him not to have wanted understanding, he partook so much of the weakness and absurdity of the times, as to send a Mrs. Whorwood to Lilly the conjurer, to know where he might be most secure. When she had received his answer, she was employed in looking out a place, somewhere in Essex, agreeable to this pretended star-fetched intelligence; but behold, while this business was in agitation, the King, in company with Sir John Berkely Mr. Ashburnham, and Col. Legge, had taken his flight! When he came within sight of the island, he dispatched the two first to Hammond, then Captain of the castle, to acquaint him with his situation and difficulties.—Hammond was flattering, the King credulous, and so the latter fell into his own trap. But he soon found cause to repent it. Hammond made no other use of this precious deposit, but to increase his own consequence with Parliament. The House perceived his drift, appointed him from 10 to 20l. a-week for his table, presented him with a thousand pounds, and voted him 500l. a-year for his life. Cromwell acquainted him with all this in a letter, with that kind of cant which he never failed to make use of, when he judged it to be for his purpose. “I know thy burden, saith he, this is an addition to it, the Lord sustain thee,” &c. On the 15th of July following, a letter was read to the House, wherein the King expressed much satisfaction at Hammond's civilities and attention; but he afterwards told Sir Philip Warwick, that Hammond was become such a rogue that he could not be in worse hands; and in a letter to Sir William Hopkins, dated Aug. 11. he says, you and N. meaning the above Mrs. Whorwood, have fully answered mine of yesterday;

and wounded soldiers from abroad, for which purpose (though we do not wish to recommend the practice) the salubrity of the air, the excellence of the water *, and its distance from the means of debauch, are circumstances happily adapted †.

We know nothing with certainty of the origin of this ancient structure. The most early mention of it which has fallen under my notice, is about the year 530, when Cerdic, king of the West Saxons, is said to have besieged and taken it. But this only implies, that at that time, it was a place of some strength, with-

terday; but a pox on go, his Majesty's usual cypher for Hammond, for I think the devil cannot outdo him either in malice or cunning. The reader will have no doubt which of these were the King's real sentiments, nor will he wonder at his being heartily tired of this kind of durance. Two schemes were planned for his escape, but both proved abortive.

* This is drawn from a large well 300 feet deep, by means of a windlass wheel, which is worked by an afs. The poor drudge, who often exhibits for the entertainment of strangers, is with some reluctance brought to his business; but when the machine is set in motion, one may see that even an afs can work with some spirit.

† The above application of the castle to the purpose of an hospital, was probably occasional only, as it has, long since the above was written, been discontinued.

without giving any light into its origin, or primitive antiquity, or when, or by whom founded. Whether therefore it were originally Romish or British can only be guessed at, though the latter perhaps may be the more probable. Without all peradventure, however, it must have undergone many repairs and alterations in such a long course of ages, of which the last was bestowed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, as may be gathered by a date still legible at the entrance of the gateway. The Mount, which supports the citadel, seems apparently the work of art, and must have been effected by immense labour. We ascend to this last retreat of the besieged by a flight of steps, near fourscore in number; and are by no means ill recompensed for the trouble of getting up to it, by the extensive and gratifying view which it gives us of the town and river of Newport, the harbour of Cowes, and parts adjacent. Here is also a well, which was formerly intended for a supply of water, but is now dry and almost filled up with rubbish.

But I take leave at present of these monuments of art and antiquity (though proper to
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be taken notice of as they occur) in order to give some attention to those more unfading beauties of nature, for which this island is so universally admired. The almost perpetual succession of hills and dales which cover the face of it, creates such a wonderful variety of breaks and openings, that the eye of the traveller is continually entertained with new and surprising landscapes of nature's exquisite painting.

It is here the love of novelty and variety, so natural to the mind of man, is most highly gratified, and at an easy expence. It is but changing one's position, for which a quarter of an hour's riding is sufficient, and the scene is cast into a new form; it is varied by so many new lines and new disclosures of land and water, that it no longer appears to be the same thing. In the middle part there is a long and almost continued ridge of these hills or downs, which runs in a winding direction almost through the whole length of the island. On these are fed vast numbers of sheep, which yield to the farmer the more than fabulous golden fleece. To the south of these the vale is by nature exceeding

ing rich. On the north, though the soil is itself less generous, yet it is so meliorated and improved by art, as to exhibit a pleasing picture of the most neat and industrious cultivation. Thus on either side we are entertained with rich enclosures laden with corn or other produce, the sight of which is equally cheering and beautiful. The coppices and clumps of trees, the villages, hamlets, and farm houses, the *summa procul villarum quæ culmina fumunt*, introduce a most charming variety, and fill us with the pleasing ideas of peace and plenty. These fruits are in truth our real earthly riches—they gladden the hearts of their daily thousands; repair the wastes of that toil which Providence has ordained to produce them, and inspire the mind, where wisdom dwells, with sentiments of reverence and gratitude. In a word, the useful and the pleasant will alone make up a satisfying combination of ideas.—It is impossible for me to say in how many different stations this combination is to be met with in high perfection. I wish some of those ingenious artists who give us copies of nature from the fine touches of the pencil, would select
and

and execute these enchanting views in a masterly manner.—Their performances would certainly make a noble collection. It is not, however, for my pen to undertake it, I must therefore decline all attempts of this kind, and only mention one thing more (which had like indeed to have escaped me) that the coppices above-mentioned abound with pheasants, as the country in general does with hares *, partridges, and other species of what is usually called game, so that the sportman wants not here his healthful amusements. Happily, however, we have no such thing as a fox; for were those noxious and subtle animals once to get possession of the inaccessible mountains and cliffs (to which they would doubtless retreat when pressed) it would be next to impossible ever to dislodge them.

One of the highest and most remarkable of these hills is named St. Catherine's, on which there are still the remains (visible at a great distance) of an ancient hermitage, dedicated to
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* It seems the island is originally indebted for a plenty of this species to a custom of giving a sheep or a lamb to any one who brought a living hare to increase the breed.

the honour of that saint, and from whence the mountain itself took, and still bears her name*.

It is so near the sea as to admit of a full view of it to the south, and on all the other points it presents a very extensive prospect of the island.

There are other stations where the sea may be seen partially, at eight, ten, or more places at a time. But I close this long epistle with little more than a mention of two or three other remains of the same kind.

One is on the north side towards Ride, called the Abbey of Quarr†.

It was first built by Baldwin de Rivers, Earl of Devon, (anno 1132) and by him dedicated to the Holy Virgin. It now contains very few vestiges of its ancient dignity. In the

E reign

* The hill is 750 feet above high water mark.—The hermitage an octagon, each side being four feet, and the height, from its base to the summit, 32 feet.—As such, it makes a very conspicuous and useful object at sea.

† This religious house, with lands for its support, was confirmed to God and the Holy Virgin, by Richard Earl of Exeter, and the son of Baldwin, to pray for the souls of his father and mother. At the suppression, it was valued at 134l. 3s. 11d. per annum.

Dugdale.

reign of Edward III. the Abbot was a man of great consequence, being stiled by that monarch *Custos Insulæ*, or Land-Warden of the Island, as appears by warrant still extant, which is addressed to him as such, and wherein he is directed to put every thing into a proper state for defence against any foreign invasion*.

To the west of this, near E. Cowes, is a large building (now the property and residence of the Earl of Clanrickard) called Barton. It was first erected in the year 1282†, as a chapel sacred to the Holy Trinity, being endowed with lands in mortmain, for the maintenance of six chaplains and a clerk, to celebrate divine service there for ever.

The last, but certainly not the least laudable of these now antiquated institutions, is the hospital of St. Cross, for the reception of the sick and infirm, which is near Newport, and still

* Rex dilecto sibi in Christo Abbati de Quarrera Custodi Insulæ & Vicæ, &c.

Prynne's Records, p. 136.

† By John de Insula or Lisse, &c.—It has since, with the manor annexed to it, become the property of the late Pope Blachford, Esq.

still called by the same name. Let such as are able, do what good is in the power of their own hand, and without leaving it to posterity to apply their benefaction. In this sentiment, I know you will agree with,

Dear Sir, &c.

L E T T E R III.

BEFORE I come to speak of the present inhabitants, or the commercial state of this island (which will close my correspondence on the subject) permit me, dear Sir, to detain you a few minutes with such an account of former occurrences in relation to it, as a few incidental and scattered fragments will enable me to collect.

Our primitive inhabitants, you will have no doubt, were of those ancient Britons who possessed the greatest part of what is now called England, till on the slight pretences which usually serve the ambitious, they were wantonly invaded by the Romans. It does not occur to me, however, that the writers of their history, from whom we borrow the most early and authentic accounts of our own, afford any considerable information in regard

gard to this island in particular. Cæsar I believe, makes no mention of it at all, at least, I am confident he says nothing of any descent upon it, and from whence we may reasonably presume that in his time there was none. We may therefore consider Flavius Vespasian, afterwards Emperor, as the first who displayed the Roman eagle on the Isle of Wight.* He was at that time Lieutenant General in the British expedition, undertaken by Claudius, and had no less than 32 engagements with our brave ancestors, took 20 of their towns, (as they affect to call them) and among the rest, added this island to the Roman empire. This was about the year 47, near a century after Cæsar's first invasion. One would think it had been hardly worth their while to have made a pompous boast of such an acquisition. There can

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be

* In Britanniam a Claudio missus, tricies et his cum hoste conflixerit, duas validissimas gentes, viginti oppida Insulam Vectam Britannicæ proximam Imperio Romano adjecerit. EUTROP. l. 7. c. 19.

—Duas validissimas gentes, superque viginta oppida et Insulam Vectam in deditionem redegit.

SUET. IN VIT VESP. c. 4

be no doubt, however, but that the only reason of its being made so late, was because it was attempted no sooner. Such a spot as this, had been hitherto regarded as nothing more than a mere appendage to greater conquests, which must fall of course together with them. From this time we must be reckoned as subjects to Roman Government, till that people thought fit to relinquish the whole of their British dominions, which was not till the year 427. Mean while the Britons were rather harrassed than totally subdued †; but as it does not appear what part the inhabitants of this island bore in the struggle, it is not to my purpose to pursue that idea.—We have therefore a gap of 400 years, and must pass on to what soon afterwards took place, the well known Saxon heptarchy.

It was the modesty of these petty sovereigns, to suppose that they best knew how to estimate and reward their own merit, or that those
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† Has (scilicet injurias) ægre tolerant, jam domiti ut pareant nondum ut serviant. (Tacit. Agricol. vit. c. 13) Brave fellows! May their sons never disgrace the noble spirit of their ancestors.

who preserved a country had the best right to govern it. It was thus they thought fit to pay themselves for the service they had done the Britons in repelling the Scots and Picts.—

Among these the forementioned Cerdic king of the West Saxons (a province nearly of the same extent as the present counties of Hants and Dorset) attacked and subdued the island.

Having so done, he made a present of it to his two nephews Stuff and Whitgar, or as some write it Wightgar, * who afterwards solely possessed it for nine years, and was buried in the village of Carisbrooke. †

After

* If this be the true spelling, probably enough, the name of the island itself, Wight, might derive from the Saxon origin, Some have supposed see Universal Magazine April 1776 that Carisbrooke also is as much as to say Whitgarburgh, on account of his being buried there.—The thing, to be sure, is of no consequence, But I shall be pardoned notwithstanding for observing, that this is forced and improbable, Carr or Caer, is an old word for a castle or place of defence, whence Carlisle, Caermarthen, Carysfort, &c, So Carisbrooke from the castle and brooke of water so near it is certainly much more natural,

† Brompton's Chronicle, 798,

After him Wolfar king of the Mercians (another branch of the Heptarchy) subdued the island to his obedience, and in like manner made a compliment of it to his friend Ethelwold, king of the South Saxons, that is to say, of what we now call Suffex and Surry. Ethelwold, it seems, had been then lately converted to the Christian faith, and was much indebted for his conversion (such as it was) to the assistance and encouragement of Wolfar, who also adopted him as his son in the faith, and did him the honour to receive him with his own hand from the sacred font. All this might be laudable enough, but surely no reason, (though it seems to have been assigned for one) why he should draw his sword upon an innocent and inoffensive people, that he might enrich his pupil with an accession of new territory. But it does not appear that the men of those days were wont to bestow much thought on the justice or propriety of their proceedings, especially when concerned with a people who were of a different religion from their own. Such, it seems, was the case with these islanders.

ers. If Wolfar and his friend Ethelwold* were converted, they were not. Whether it was that the latter took no care to have his new subjects instructed, or that they were indisposed to learn, yet so we are told it was, that no considerable impressions were as yet made upon them, and they are represented as holding fast their old druidical superstition, even so late as the year 687. Then or then about, it was, that Cædwalla, another king of the West Saxons, took it into his head to make war with Ethelwold, and having killed both him and his two sons, the island was forced to submit to the yoke of the former †.

Cædwalla is also one of those strange characters which the Monkish historians of those times have handed down to us under the idea of their being converts to the christian faith. At this time,

* Quorum rex scil. (Australium Saxonum) Ethelwoldus suasionem regis Wolferi paulo ante a sancto Birinio Episcopo fuerat baptizatus, et a dicto Wolfero de lavacro sancto susceptus, in cujus adoptionis signum Insulam dederat Vectam et etiam ingentem provinciam occidentalium Saxonum,

† Interea Cædwalla juvenis de regio genere Gervisorum dictum Regem Ethelwold interfecit—Insulam Vectam adhuc idolatram debellavit,

time, however, he was so raw a convert himself as to be as yet uninitiated, † but he had so flaming a zeal, it seems, as to make terrible havock § among these poor people, under the pretence of their obstinate adherence to idolatry. They had already been reduced, by one devastation and another, to about 1200 families, which were now all destroyed, except about 2000 souls, by this son of violence. These savings of the sword were converted by Wilfred, sometime Archbishop of York, but then in exile. This prelate happening to be at the court of Cædwalla, obtained his permission to try what could be done with these obstinate people. Accordingly he sent missionaries † to treat with them. There was however, no great merit in succeeding under such circumstances.

† Nondum regeneratus in Christo; which then meant nothing more than not having yet received the ceremony of baptism.

* Cædwalla cepit Insulam Vectam quæ eatenus tota Idolatriæ dedita tragica cæde indigenas exterminari contendit,

SPELM, 173,

† Per ministros verbi Dei quos illuc direxit ab Idolatriæ cultu Insulam liberavit et sibi subjugavit.

stances. It is not to be imagined they were disposed to invite the sword amongst them a second time, when they had lately felt it with so keen a severity. But what a wretched method of bringing over converts to that religion, which in itself, is no less admissible for the humanity and gentleness of its spirit, than for the purity and excellence of its truth! Such, however was the discipline of a dark and barbarous age, in which Romish superstition, ever haughty and intolerant, had retained the name but lost the nature of christianity.

From this æra of our conversion (which does neither us nor the authors of it any great credit) we have no anecdotes of the island for more than 200 years, that is, till towards the end of the tenth century.

At this time a set of Danish Pirates (for they were no better) had for many years grievously infested the British coasts. Among other places, the island felt the smart of their barbarities. They frequently anchored their ships within its shelter,* and were a sore annoyance

* Quotiescunque in Vesta jacuit—Sim, Dunelm.—Paganorum exercitus.

noyance, not only to the island itself, but to the neighbouring towns of Southampton, Winchester, &c. It is needless to add, that after these barbarians had effected an establishment of their power over England in general (which however held but 24 years) we must of course, for that time, be under Danish government.

The like is true of the Norman conquest, which succeeded next. Upon this revolution (anno 1066) the island was presented to one of the first favourites in the conqueror's train, viz. the forementioned William Fitz-Osborn, then also created the Earl of Hereford. This nobleman was therefore the first lord of the island, who held it as a fief under the grant of an English monarch. He had two sons, but both dying before him, he was succeeded in this lordship by his grandson, Richard de Rivers, Earl of Exeter, who being banished for some insurrections against William Rufus, it was afterwards held in succession by the Earls of Devon and their heirs for ten or eleven descents,

exercitus (scil. Danorum) frequenter Insulam Vectem aduit, moreque solito praedae infligit. Ibid.

scents, i. e. till about the middle of the 13th century. The last branch of this family was the Lady Isabella de Fortibus, who sold the lordship of it to Edward I. for 20,000 marks*. Thus the island again became the property of the crown, and the government of it was bestowed upon such objects as either service or flattery had placed in the sun-shine of royal favour. Among the rest Henry VI. had a fancy to make Henry de Beauchamp, Duke of Warwick, King of the Wight, and he crowned him as such with his own hand; but this dignity, as to the royal part of it, died with its first and only possessor.

It can afford no matter of information or entertainment, to enter into a particular detail of the succeeding governorships as they were conferred in the several reigns†, I shall there-

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fore

* Every one knows that 20,000 marks are equal to 13,333l. 6s. 8d. a trifling sum. But it should be considered that, in proportion to the decrease of the nominal value of money since that time (an. 1293.) which is supposed to be as one to 15, it would be exactly equal to 200,000l. of our present money.

† They may be seen in Prynne's Records, p. 203. Lord Bacon, in his history of Henry VII. relates an anecdote of one
of

fore only observe in general, that in time of former disputes with France, the military arrangements for our defence were considered as objects of great national importance. Thus in the reign of Edward III. we find beacons were erected in no less than 29 different places, in order to spread the alarm of an approaching enemy. At each of these, two men by day and four by night, were constantly obliged to

them (Lord Woodville) which is somewhat singular. Charles VIII. of France (anno 1488) made war upon the Duke of Brittany. This raised the jealousy of the English, lest the addition of that province to the crown of France should in future be hurtful to them as neighbours. On this principle they wished much to succour the Duke, but Henry did not care to be seen in it.—Woodville, a valiant gentleman, says Bacon, and desirous of honour, applied to the King for leave to raise a body of volunteers for this service, but Henry refused him, or at least seemed to do it. Nevertheless Woodville not giving up the point, went secretly into the Isle of Wight, of which he was then governor, and levied a fair troop of 400 men. With these he went into Britanny and joined the Duke's forces, but an unsuccessful battle being fought near St. Alban, Lord Woodville and almost all his soldiers were slain fighting valiantly, p. 48 and 62. In consequence of this fatal event, and the better to repopulate the island, a law was made, prohibiting any of the islanders to hold a farm of more than the yearly value of ten marks.

to keep watch, and ward; proprietors or holders of lands, were compelled to find men and arms at the proportion of one man for every 20l. a year. The lord of the island found 76 men, and the clergy who held the best livings, 16 among them.* Some of the chief ecclesiastical benefices, even out of the island, were obliged to contribute their certain quotas towards the expence of defending it, such as the Abbot of Glastonbury, Bishop of Winchester, &c. all which aids were summonable at the pleasure of the Custos Insulæ, or war-

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den

* Ces sont les gardes services des gents de seinte Eglise de L'isle de Wight, ordonnez en defens de la dite Isle en tems de guerre.—De la Personne de l'eglise de Brerdyng pur lx livres de tente en la dite Isle 2 hommes d'arms, &c. Prynné p. 209. The reader may not be displeased to see how the several livings were valued at that time, viz.

Brading	—	60	Gatcombe and Chale	—	40
Godhill	—	100	Freshwater	—	40
Newchurch	—	100	Shalfleet	—	40
Atherton	—	40	Calborn	—	40
Carisbrooke	—	40	Newtown	—	30
St. Helena	—	40	Brixton	—	40

A proportion to their present value, perhaps of about one to five.

den of the island, who was appointed by the crown, and whose power, in cases of emergency, was similar to that of a Roman dictator.

The French, notwithstanding these precautions, found some few opportunities to make good their landing, and to create some trouble. In the reign of Richard II. (an. 1377) they set fire to several places,* and laid siege to Carisbrooke Castle, but after levying a contribution of 1000 marks, they retired without carrying their point. In the year 1403 and 1545, we also meet with similar attempts, in which some mischief was done; but on the whole, they were attended with still less success†

These

* Yarmouth and Newtown were both burnt in this expedition; but the castle was effectually defended by Sir Hugh Tyril, and so many of the besiegers were killed in a narrow pass near Newport, that it still bears the name of Dead man's Lane. Sir. R. Worley's Hist.

† In the attempt of 1545, two thousand men were landed on St. Helen's point, but the valour of the inhabitants (says the Bishop of Hereford) made them change their design, and forced them again to their ships. Annals of Henry VIII. p. 197.

These specimens shew us what, under Providence, is the great Palladium of British security. Since the superiority of our naval strength has been felt and acknowledged, nothing of this kind has given us any alarm.

Within the memory, however, of many who are still living, two regiments of militia were constantly kept up and exercised in the military art. They had for this purpose several field days in the year, but, as by degrees, these meetings came to be considered as nothing more than holiday parade, they were at length totally dropt. Under the late act, indeed, about 60 men have been yearly trained to this exercise. Besides this, the only remains of our military establishment, are the continuance of a governor, lieutenant-governor, with captains, gunners, and soldiers to the several garrisons, all which though they have handsome appointments, are become mere sine-cures. It is easy to see into what scale these *instrumenta regni* are intended to throw a weight; but how

far they are necessary to keep the political balance even is not for me to determine, nor do you need any information on this head from,

Dear Sir, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R IV.

WITH this letter, dear Sir, I shall finish my correspondence with you on the present subject, as it will then be carried to as much extent as probably you will either expect or desire.

I do not think we can by any means be said to be a populous country in proportion to our extent of ground. How far we may be so called when compared with other islands on the same coast, I pretend not to know. We are certainly so when compared with our former selves, if 1200 families, as mentioned in the days of Cerdic, were any thing like their usual complement. Families, I think, seldom run to more than five or six persons upon an average, which would make the whole amount to be not more than six or seven thousand people. We have at present, I should suppose, near half that number in Newport only,* and

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* By an account lately taken they were found to be 2860.

as these can hardly be reckoned more than about a tenth part of the whole, we may reasonably suppose the number of souls in the island at large, to be somewhere about twenty-thousand. Even this is a very moderate number for such an extent, as there are several single manufacturing towns which are said to contain many more. And yet we do not seem to want people. The reason of this will soon appear upon considering, that in all places the number of hands will not only bear a proportion to the quantity of business done, but also to the nature and quality of that business. This is the case with us. Our trade in its kind is by no means inconsiderable. I am well informed it pays to government not less than 30,000*l.* a year. But the nature of it is such, that of all other, perhaps, it requires the fewest hands in proportion to the value of the concern. A farmer, a mealman or a malter, may be in as large a way as a manufacturer of cloth or hardwares, but yet one of the first mentioned can manage his business with a tenth part of the assistance which the others want.

With

With regard to our inhabitants themselves, I shall naturally be led, in descending to particulars, to speak of such as have the first claim to notice in respect to rank and property. Some indeed have great estates in the island, who do not reside in it, as the Right Honourable Lord Edgcumbe, Sir John Carter, Thomas Fairfax Esq. &c. But I mean to speak of stated inhabitants. Of these I had occasion just to mention one in the close of my second letter, besides whom the only one of the Right Honourable distinction, is the Lady Holmes, whose mansion is in the town of Newport.* As the late Lord Holmes left no issue, and his title was indefeasible, the heir to his estates both here and in Ireland (of which kingdom he was a Baron) is the present Leonard Trougher Holmes, of Westover, in the parish of Calbourn, Esq.

Another family of distinction have their summer residence at their seat at Nunwell, near Brading, I mean that of the present Sir William

* Both these are since dead, and have none to succeed them in rank, at least in the island.

liam Oglander, Bart. It is remarkable that this distinguished family has been in the island probably ever since the conquest, mention being made of it so far back as the 18th of Edward II. (anno 1325.) It was then that Robert Oglander appears to have been among the jurors upon an inquest at Shidebridge,* concerning such as were obliged by ancient usage to attend the beacons, &c. He was therefore then considered as an old inhabitant, and who, as such, was well acquainted with the matter in question. The † Urry family is under the like predicament, one of them also being impannelled upon the same occasion, and of which there are respectable branches still subsisting. The above inquest was made and taken

* The then Campus Martius of the Island, about three-fourths of a mile from Newport.—In the old Norman French this family hath the description of D'ogelandie, as Robert D'ogelandie, &c, &c. Robert of the Oakland, from whence, probably, the name Oglander.

† Inquisitio capta apud Schidhambrigge die Jovis, &c. anno regni Edvardi filii Regis Edvardi decimo octavo coram Johanne de-la Hoese & Joh. de Insula custodibus portuum, etc. per sacramentum Roberti Urry, Roberti D'ogelandie, etc. Prynn, p. 209.

taken before John Horsey and John Lisle, who bore their commission under the title of *Custodes Portuum*. A descendant of the former of these gentlemen, was Sir Edward Horsey, many years governor of the island. His monument in armour is in Newport church.* John de Lisle was afterwards created Baron de Infula, with a pension of 200 marks a year, to enable him the better to support that dignity. One cannot but remark the contrast between this ancient family and that of the Oglanders.† The latter still continues to be one of the first families in the island, whereas the former is not only extinct (at least in these parts) but the last branch of it was many years a common

* This gentleman was a military character of some distinction. In the years 1676-77 he was employed by Queen Elizabeth as ambassador to Don John of Austria (son of Charles V.) on his accession to the government of the Netherlands.

† The Madam Lisle who at a great age was among the fatal sufferers in the affair of Monmouth. was a lady of this unfortunate family. Her crime was giving entertainment to one Hicks, a presbyterian clergyman, whose zeal it seems led him to have some concern in that ill-judged business.

West. Martyrology.

mon soldier, and died a few years since in great obscurity.

But to return to my narrative. Another family of like rank and long standing in the island, is that of the present Sir Richard Worsley, of Appuldercombe, Bart. His seat is near Godshill, where there are several monuments of his ancestors to be seen in the church, which are of very curious marble and fine workmanship *. Appuldercombe house is very ancient, being formerly the property, and, I suppose, the residence of the lady Isabella de Fortibus, but it has been modernized and, beautified at a vast expence, both by the late Sir Thomas and the present Sir Richard. It is, and will be 'for its improvements are not yet completed) one of the chief objects of the kind both for pleasantness of situation, and the ornaments by which it is decorated. The paintings wherewith it is enriched from Italy and

* Sir Richard Worsley (says Sir John Oglander) lieth buried in the upper end of the South Channel in Godshill church without any monument, who was worthy to have his statue made in gold. M. S.—He was the first baronet in the island; created June 29, 1611.

and other parts are said to be chosen with great taste, and consequently to be of great value, and near it is a monument which commands one of the finest internal prospects in the whole island.* There are several branches of this family who have genteel mansions in different parts of it, as that of Edward Meux Worsley, Esq. of Gatcombe, which was built by the late Sir Edward, and much admired for its elegance of taste and situation. Not far from this is that of Robert Worsley, Esq; at Pidford, which is also modern built, and very neat. To these may be added the seats of Sir Fitz-Williams Barrington, of Swainston, Bart. and that of the late John Leigh, Esq. at North-Court (now or late the residence of the Right Honourable the Lord Ducie) both which are worth a stranger's attention. But that which is thought to merit it most, in point of situation and for the exceeding elegance of its gardens, is the seat of

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Sir

* This is an obelisk inscribed to the memory of Sir Robert Worsley. It should be added, that the entrance into the park has lately been adorned with a very elegant gateway of the Ionic order.

Sir Nath Grose, near Ride — But it would be tedious to mention every gentleman whose property entitles him to the rank of esquire, or whose country residence adds to the pleasure of a view of our island,

I proceed, therefore, to take some notice of that which is the parent and support of every elegance and comfort of life; I mean the articles of trade and commerce, This you will conclude from what has been already observed, consists chiefly with us of dealings in corn and wool. These are the principal productions of the island, and consequently our staple commodities. Of the former perhaps more is produced on this spot than on any ground of the like extent in his Majesty's dominions. Our home consumption (I mean within the island) is hardly supposed to be a tenth part of it. We are in a manner the granary of the western countries, and the chief resource of government contracts for wheat, malt, flour and biscuit. You will hence suppose, that the quantities of corn exported either in grain or in flour are very large, which creates a principal part of that employment
which

which is found for our shipping and the mills, at which a large quantity of our wheat is manufactured. There are no less than eight or nine water mills for this purpose within about a mile of the town of Newport, besides many others, some of which will grind and dress from 80 to 100 quarters a week. From these flour is exported to Ireland and the western countries of England, where the produce in this way is comparatively small, and consumers (for the reason already given) more numerous in proportion. At times, when exportations abroad also are allowable and profitable to the merchant, he naturally looks to the market of Newport for a supply, at which there have been sometimes seen 200 waggons in one day laden with those valuable articles of wheat and barley, but of late years the custom of selling by sample only, has much prevailed.

As to our wool (though we grow large quantities scarce any of it is manufactured here. In this article our principal mercers are the merchants. They take it all of the farmer at the market price, and export it in the

fleece for the use of the staplers and clothiers of the western and northern counties.

There are two other commodities which seem to have as good a title to the rank of natural curiosities, as to be considered among the articles of commerce. These are copperas stones and white shining sand. The former are gathered up in heaps on the south shore, and occasionally sent to London, &c. for the purpose of producing the several species of vitriol. The latter is dug out of some very valuable mines, which are the property of David Urry, Esq; near Yarmouth; and from thence sent to London and Bristol for the use of the glass manufactories.

I have already hinted that what other foreign merchandize we have, chiefly centers at Cowes, which is best adapted to that purpose, as being the chief port in the island. Here the rice ships from Carolina, intended for foreign markets, have usually cleared and paid their duties, a benefit of which the loss has been severely felt, as the effect of the late American war, and of which, alas! there are now but little hopes that it will ever return.—What we have to expect
in

in time to come, experience only can shew, but hitherto the several sources of business which have been mentioned, have afforded not only employment to the industrious poor, but encrease of fortune and riches to those whose properties have been occupied in them. Few places have a greater proportion of people who have made handsome acquisitions in business, where industry in general is better recompensed, fewer objects of distress to be seen, or the poor and disabled better provided for. Our want of manufactures, indeed, must always have this inconvenience attending it, that those who are either too old or too young to undertake much labour, rather want subjects for that little of which they are capable. This renders the almost entire support of both when poor, a heavy and growing charge. A remedy for this is not easy to be applied. Whilst those of both sexes are young and in full strength, they want not employ as husbandmen, artificers, mariners, or household servants. In all these they can get better wages than manufacturers in general can afford to give. For this reason a remedy, if attempted

to be set on foot, would scarce meet with acceptance, the consequence of which is, and probably will continue to be, that as soon as men are incapable of a proper days labour, they cease to labour at all, and think of nothing but the parish funds for their chief support.

In some measure, to give a check to this growing evil, the principal gentlemen of the island formed a scheme (anno 1770) of establishing by act of parliament one general house of industry for the whole island. The plan was adopted and carried into execution at a very large expence. The building for this purpose is erected in the forest of Parkhurst, near Newport, and contains generally about five hundred paupers. The scheme is certainly capable of being made a public benefit, and the people already make most of their own wearables, but what advantages will accrue from it on the whole, a more mature state will best discover. It still remains to be wished, that the children of the poorer sort, whose parents are not a public expence, could find a more early and ready way to be usefully employed.

ployed. It was this apparent defect which gave rise to a very humane institution, which has now subsisted near twenty years, viz. a subscription school for poor girls, in which about twenty at a time are clothed, taught to work, read and write, till they are fit to undertake an easy introductory service.

To such of these a premium is given as continue in their first place for a whole year and merit a good character. Thus are they introduced into life, and set as it were on their own legs, as useful and respectable members of society.—Hard indeed is the fate of those poor children, whose parents have left them no other inheritance but their own depravity, laziness, and vice. They need our assistance the more, as they seem to deserve it less, if peradventure they may be rescued from final ruin. Happy they who are blest both with the feeling heart, and the able hand! the latter of which is perhaps the only advantage which a virtuous mind can envy the great.

I am, with the most cordial respect,

Dear Sir, &c.

P O S T.

P O S T S C R I P T.

AS an article of history, it may be no improper, nor perhaps, unpleasing supplement to the preceding papers, to add a short sketch of some of the principal literary characters of the two last centuries which this island had the honour to produce.—The first of this description which I meet with on record, is the Rev. Henry Cole, D. D. L. L. D. Dean of St. Paul's, &c.—This gentleman was a native of Godshill, and after the usual course of education at Wykeham's school, Winchester, was admitted of New College, Oxford. He there commenced Batchelor in the Civil Law, in the year 1529, and Doctor in the same faculty in 1540. A great part of this interval was spent in Italy, and other parts abroad, which he judged most proper to perfect him in the walks of science, and the knowledge of
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the world. On his return he was chosen Warden of his maternal College, obtained some good preferments, and was generally considered as very respectable and eminent in the line of his profession. Leland, the antiquary, makes very honourable mention of his abilities, and in one of Ascham's letters there is a handsome compliment paid to his learning and politeness. "I must be totally destitute of these qualities myself (says that elegant writer) if I did not both love and admire them in you.*" This letter is without a date, a circumstance which I mention, because Doctor Cole's public character was not always of the most uniform tenor. It had doubtless been more happy for his fame, had he lived in times when political interests were less fluctuating. His qualifications and prospects led him to take an active part in most of the changes of those very unsettled times. When the doctrines of the reformation (more anciently those of Wickliffe) began first to revive in England, he strenuously opposed them both from the pulpit

pulpit and the press. Mean while, as the court of Henry (for reasons universally known) grew daily more cool to the See of Rome, and the people still cooler to her extravagant corruptions, the Doctor assumed a milder tone, went often to hear Peter Martyr preach, and expressed a very great regard for him. He also acknowledged Henry's supremacy in the church, and in his successor's time (Edward VI.) he went so far as to communicate with the reformers, and his pulpit sounded high of their doctrines. But in the reign of Mary, his views of things were totally altered, and his zeal returned to its old channel. It was now that he was honoured with his doctor's degree in divinity, and made dean of St. Paul's with a long *et cætera* of other lucrative posts and preferments*. It was doubtless a mark of the esteem in which his abilities were held, that he was chosen to maintain a public disputation at Oxford against Cranmer and Ridley, and when the former was destined to the stake for heresy, Cole preached and published the execution sermon.

* Biographia Britannica, Wood's, Ath. Oxon. etc.

sermon. In short, he seems to have been at this time a leading man of a very leading party, as may further appear by a singular anecdote, which as it concluded his popularity, it may also conclude this abridgement of his memoirs. Mary, the royal mistress of his fortune, was determined, it seems, to act the same fatal tragedy among her protestant subjects in Ireland as she had already done at home in Smithfield. For executing this purpose her commission was made out, and who should have the care of it but her trusty and well beloved Doctor Cole? He undertook the charge, and in the progress of this business, making some little stay at Chester, he was waited on by the Mayor of that city. In the course of the conversation which passed between these two, the doctor was so full of his commission, that he could not forbear, as we say, to let the cat out of the bag. "I have that
 " with me, saith he, producing a little box
 " from his portmanteau, which will lash the
 " heretics of Ireland." His hostess, a Mrs. Edmonds, had the good luck to overhear this, and being more than half a heretic herself, and
 having

having a brother of that profession in Dublin, she became much troubled, and taking her opportunity whilst the Doctor was gone down to compliment his worship the Mayor to the door, she stepped into the Dean's apartment, took out the commission and put a pack of cards into the box in its room. The Doctor, having completed his civilities, returns to his chamber and puts up his box without the least suspicion of what had happened. Soon after he set sail for Dublin, where he arrived, December 7, 1558. Being introduced to Lord Fitz-Walter (then Lord Lieutenant) and the privy council, he began with a speech in form to set forth the nature of his business, and then delivered his box with due ceremony. "What have we here?" says his Lordship at the opening. "This is nothing but a pack of cards." It is not easy to conceive the Doctor's feelings at the ridiculous figure he now made. He could only say, that a commission he certainly had, but who had played him this trick he could not tell. "Why then," Mr. Dean, says his lordship, you have nothing to do but to return to London again,

" and

“and get your commission renewed, whilst we
 “in the mean time shuffle your cards.” This
 sarcastic advice the doctor, no doubt with in-
 finite chagrin, was obliged to take, though at
 so disagreeable a season of the year; but whilst
 all this was about, meeting with contrary
 winds and other vexatious delays, behold the
 Queen died, and so the business came all to
 nothing. It is said, moreover, that Queen
 Elizabeth was so well pleased with this story,
 that she allowed Mrs. Edmonds 40l. a year
 during her life, for this seasonable and impor-
 tant piece of dexterity.—Stretch’s Beauties of
 History, vol. i. p. 173.

We have (secondly) a much more amiable,
 though on the whole, a not much more fortu-
 nate character, in the person of Sir John Cheke,
 Knight. His descent was from a respectable
 family, whose estate and mansion were at Mot-
 teston. In the year 1531, being then 17 years
 of age, he was entered of St. John’s college,
 Cambridge. His uncommon skill in languages,
 more especially in the Greek (at that time but
 little studied) together with his fine classical
 taste, made him the pride and boast of that
 H university,

university *. When he was no more than 26 years old, he had the honour to be chosen first Greek professor, in a foundation then lately instituted by Henry VIII. a post wherein he acquitted himself with the most indisputed honour and ability. No genius was ever better adapted to the revival of letters, which was then happily beginning to make a rapid progress. He was not only instrumental in bringing the study of the Greek language into general vogue, but in reforming an uncouth and barbarous pronunciation of it, which had then long prevailed. Like most other reformations, indeed, this met at first with the opposition which prejudice and vanity never fail to promote. Gardiner, of Winchester, in particular, made as much noise about it, as if the happiness of both worlds had depended on the matter in question. In the true spirit of popery, he thought to carry every thing by his magisterial *sic edico*. Accordingly he published a formal edict against Cheke's new way, as he called it, and forbade every one to make use of

* Epist. R. Aschami, lib. ii. p. 263.

of it on pain of his high displeasure. This, however, only served to call out the professor's abilities in his defence, to the astonishment of the learned world both at home and abroad. In a word, trifling as this debate might seem to be in itself, the old prelate had ever reason to be mortified with the success of it on his part. He found himself clearly worsted, even in point of argument, and in spite of all his menaces, the new method was proved to be in reality the old one, and universally adopted. Accuracy, indeed, was so much Mr. Cheke's characteristic, that it went into every thing he undertook. He was even allowed to write the finest hand of almost any man of his time.

In the year 1544, his reputation stood so high, that he was appointed to be one of the young prince Edward's tutors. It was an age when learning was considered as one of the first recommendations to public notice*. Ed-

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ward,

* This fact is undoubtedly alluded to in those lines of our immortal Milton.

Thy

ward, who was himself a surprising scholar, had the highest sense of his preceptor's merit. He not only conferred upon him the honour of Knighthood (anno 1551) but made him soon after Chamberlain of the Exchequer, and a member of the Privy Council. But, alas! these bright days were soon overcast. The immature death of this amiable young monarch threw the whole protestant interest of this kingdom into the deepest consternation. Sir John took part with the unfortunate Lady Jane Grey. As a protestant and a patriot he could not do otherwise. This step was, however, his ruin. Accepting the office of her secretary, he was arraigned and condemned for high treason, though Mary was not at that time acknowledged sovereign. He obtained, indeed, her Majesty's pardon respecting his life, but was forced to go abroad for quiet and a subsistence. For a while he read Greek lectures at Padua, and afterwards at Stratzburg, where receiving information that
his

Thy age like ours. O soul of Sir John Choke,
Hated not learning worse than toad or asp,
When thou taught'st Cambridge and King Edward Greek.

his lady was at Brussels in her way to meet him, he hastened thither to join her, but being basely betrayed, he was secured, brought home a prisoner, and committed to the tower. In this situation he was daily visited by the Queen's chaplains, who teized him with their importunities to become reconciled to their holy mother. Finding their arguments made no impressions, they changed their ground, and told him plainly, that he had no other alternative but to turn or burn. This was an argument which he at least perfectly well understood, and alas! too sensibly felt the weight of it. After some hesitation, he sent a paper to Cardinal Pole, containing some extracts from the Fathers, which favoured highly of something like transubstantiation. He pretended (meaning, I suppose, with a good deal of qualifying) that these were his own sentiments upon this subject. This paper was accompanied with a letter to the Cardinal, and another to the Queen, full of professions of loyalty, and praying, that by the interest of the former he might be excused the painful ceremony of a public recantation. But, poon gentlemen, he

deceived himself greatly, if he imagined there was any thing to be gained by these half concessions. The public recantation and public penance of so great a man, were triumphs which the honour of the church could not dispense with. Both were rigorously exacted, and, alas! both reluctantly complied with. One pities the weakness of the man, but who can answer for himself in so trying a case! For the present he saved his life, but who was to restore him his peace? Mortified beyond expression, he was obliged to be present at the examination of heretics, upon almost every occasion;—a bondage to a generous mind, undoubtedly far worse than death! He survived this extreme vexation but little more than a year, viz. to September 13, 1557. Thus died of grief, in the prime of his days, one of the most learned and ingenious, and (this frailty excepted) one of the most virtuous and excellent of men.

Another name which undoubtedly deserves a mention, is that of (thirdly) Thomas James, D.D. This learned divine, and antiquary, was born, as Mr. Wood apprehends, at New-
port,

port, in or about the year 1571. He was educated at the same school and college with his countryman, Dr. Cole, but a man of a much more steady and uniform character. His acquaintance both with ancient and modern learning was so general, and his memory so happy, that he was esteemed and appealed to as a kind of living library. He had so intimate a knowledge of ancient M. S. S. in particular, that he could tell in what age any one was written, by a bare inspection of the character. So well earned a reputation, naturally recommended him to Sir Thomas Bodley as his first librarian, a choice in which the whole university most heartily concurred. In this situation he much assisted his learned friend, Mr. Camden, in collecting materials for that great work the *Britannia* *. He is said to have begun the history of his native island in Latin, and of which the introduction is still preserved in the above library. Many, however, were the more important works which he published, in which he discovered great capacity and diligence,

* See Camden's letter of thanks to Dr. J. prefixed to the work, and also the work itself, p. 601.

ligence, and an uncommon ardour in the search of truth. In the course of these researches, he more than suspected, that many frauds had been made use of to corrupt the monuments of sacred antiquity. In a convocation held at Oxford (1625) he moved for a committee to collate all the manuscript fathers in the libraries of England both public and private, that the forgeries of foreign popish editions, might be fully detected and exposed. But the spirit of the times was by no means favourable to such a design, and so it met with but little encouragement. Finding, therefore, he was likely to meet with but small assistance, he determined to do what he could in it himself. This, beyond a doubt, is what Camden alludes to, when he says of Dr. James*, “ That he
 “ was a learned man, a true lover of books,
 “ and wholly devoted to them ;” adding, “ he
 “ is at this time searching the libraries of Eng-
 “ land from a concern for the public good, and
 “ with a design in which (if God succeed him)
 “ he will be of no little service to the learned
 “ world.”

* Britannia, p. 60x.

“ world.” It is evident from this passage that so great a man as Camden, did not consider Dr. James’s project, as either visionary in its nature, or invidious in its principle. He died however (anno 1629) without being able to bring it to the effect he wished, leaving behind him (says his biographer) this character.—

“ That he was the most industrious and indefatigable writer against popery, that had been educated at Oxford since the reformation.”

I close this short list with (fourthly) Robert Hooke, M. D. * This scientific and mechanic genius, was born at Freshwater (of which parish his father was curate) in the year 1635. Being pretty early in life left an orphan he was taken into the house, and under the care of the Rev. Dr. Busby. By his instructions, he acquired not only a competent knowledge of Latin and Greek, but also a considerable acquaintance with the oriental languages. At intervals, he at the same time studied Euclid, by the Doctor’s particular encouragement.

* He took his diploma or licence in physic, but it does not appear that he ever practised; he was, however, commonly called Dr. Hooke.

ment. And being from thence removed to Christchurch, Oxford, he there met with full scope to his active and inquisitive disposition. He was particularly taken notice of by Dr. Willis, who frequently employed him as an assistant in his chymical operations, By his interest also, he was recommended to the Hon. Robert Boyle, Esq. to whom Mr. Hooke's inventive powers were highly acceptable, as he was of great service to him in the invention and construction of the air pump. Whilst thus employed, in a way so perfectly agreeable to his contemplative and mechanical turn, he also studied astronomy under the direction of Dr. Seth. This noble science was likewise indebted to our young student, for the invention and improvement of many curious optical instruments, and he is particularly famous for his being the sole inventor, of what is called the pendulum spring of a watch, so that every gentleman carries in his pocket a monument of Mr. Hooke's ingenuity. His publications relative to his inventions or improvements in microscopical and other like instruments, were very numerous, and such as gain-

ed him a very great reputation, both at home and abroad. In 1662, he was chosen curator, or superintendent of experiments to the royal society then lately instituted: an undoubted proof of the high opinion that learned body had of him. But the most lucrative post he ever enjoyed, was that of city surveyor, after the great fire in 1666. This gave him an opportunity of making several thousand pounds in a few years. But neither this, nor any other object, took him off from his favourite pursuit of experiments and inventions, of which he was continually producing and publishing something new. It is, indeed, often observed, that the heads of great men (projectors more especially) have some whimsical niche. The reader will hardly suppose that Dr. Hooke was an exception to this rule, when he is told that he invented above 30 methods for human beings to fly. It is true, that after all his ingenuity and pains, we poor earth-born mortals, are to this day as far from possessing this curious art as ever. But, not to mention that a grave and learned Bishop was much occupied in the same fancy, these foibles in men
of

of real genius, are but like spots in the sun, visible indeed, but not able, on the whole, to obscure its glory. Hooke had doubtless of these specks, notwithstanding which, he was a great luminary in the learned and ingenious world. I shall only add, that he finished his course, March 3, 1702, and that my chief intention in producing this specimen, is to shew, that this little island, fertile in most things, has by no means been without her contributions to the general republic of British literature.

F I N I S.

